**

Inauguration of the Tolon District Research-for-Development Platform: Northern Region, Ghana

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The Africa Research In Sustainable Intensification for the Next Generation (Africa RISING) program comprises three research-for-development projects supported by the United States Agency for International Development as part of the U.S. government’s Feed the Future initiative.

Through action research and development partnerships, Africa RISING will create opportunities for smallholder farm households to move out of hunger and poverty through sustainably intensified farming systems that improve food, nutrition, and income security, particularly for women and children, and conserve or enhance the natural resource base.

The three regional projects are led by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (in West Africa and East and Southern Africa) and the International Livestock Research Institute (in the Ethiopian Highlands). The International Food Policy Research Institute leads the program’s monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment. <http://africa-rising.net/>

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# Background

Africa RISING project is a USAID government funded project led by International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA). It is a research project into sustainable intensification and integration of natural resources to improve productivity, nutrition, income security and reduce hunger and poverty in smallholder families especially children and women. The project is being implemented in the three northern regions of Ghana (Northern, Upper East and Upper West). In Northern region the project is implemented in two districts, namely Tolon and Savelugu Districts. In Tolon District, the project is implemented in five communities: Cheyohi No. 2, Tingoli, Gbanjong, Tibogunayili and Kprim.

# Research-for-Development (R4D) Platform

Africa RISING project framework proposes the use of R4D platforms to identify critical research intervention along value chains. The project in northern Ghana started with Farmer Based Organization (FBO’s) at the community levels, but now the focus has been expanded beyond the FBO’s at community level to include all active stakeholders and bring them to district level R4D platform. The district level R4D establishment and management is based on the principles set out in the Africa RISING framework.

# Highlights of innovation platform meeting

The meeting was held on 20th January 2015 in Tolon town at the District Assembly hall. Participants were made up of research scientists, representatives of FBO’s from all intervention communities, non-governmental organizations, private sector, policy makers and other governmental institutions needed to ensure sustainability of the R4D platform.

## Meeting objectives and expected outcomes

The main goal for launching the R4D platform is to make research interventions demand driven (bottom-up approach). Specific objectives of the Tolon District R4D platform are to:

1. Bring stakeholders or value chain actors on a common platform for discussion on problems affecting agriculture from production to consumption within the District.
2. Elect and inaugurate R4D committee members and executives.
3. Brief R4D committee members and executives on their roles and functions.

Expected outcomes

1. Establishment of Tolon District R4D platform.
2. Inauguration of R4D committee members and executives.
3. Functioning R4D committee members and executives.

## Meeting process

The meeting was chaired by the Tolon District Coordinating Director Mr Abdulai Yussif. He began the program with a welcome speech followed by self-introduction of all the participants.

# Welcome address by District Director of Agriculture

Hajia Hawa Musah, Tolon District Director of Agriculture, welcomed all participants to the meeting. She expressed her happiness for the initiative by IITA-Africa RISING and requested all the stakeholders to come on board and work hard for the success of the R4D platform.

# Speech by District Chief Executive

The District Chief Executive, Hon Alhaji Abukari Seidu read a brief speech. In his speech, he welcomed the launch of the R4D platforms which will help majority of the rural people and poor peasant farmers who mostly rely on agriculture for income to address some of the major challenges they are facing in farming (from production to consumption). Some of these challenges include high cost of inputs like fertilizers, insecticides, herbicides, poor yields and reduction in farm sizes. He therefore encouraged farmers and other stakeholders to collaborate and work closely with IITA through the R4D platform in order to benefit from high yielding improved seeds and improved crop husbandry practices.

# Presentation on Africa RISING Background and R4D platform

Dr Dugje Ibrahim, on behalf of the Africa RISING Chief Scientist (Dr Asamoah Larbi) gave a brief presentation on the background of Africa RISING project and objectives of research for development platform. He said, the objective of Africa RISING is to support smallholder farmers to eradicate poverty and hunger through improved cropping systems, household income security as well as conserving the natural resources. The Africa RISING program operates in West Africa, Southern and Eastern Africa and Ethiopian highlands. In West Africa, the project operates in Ghana and Mali. In Ghana, it operates in the three northern regions with two districts in each region and 25 intervention communities in all the regions. A total of about 1,500 households are benefiting from the project in the three northern regions of Ghana. He further added that, the R4D platform will provide a common ground for networking of stakeholders to bring new technologies to economic use.

Dr Dugje briefed participants about the importance of R4D platform, the need for sustainability after the project has ended and asked them to select good leaders to represent them on the platform. Participants were allowed to make contributions to the number and stakeholders to form the District R4D platform committee. He advised that the District level R4D platform committee members should comprise of staff from Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA), Ghana Health Service, Ghana Education Service, Farmer Based Organization, policy makers and value chain actors.

# Election of R4D Committee and executives

R4D committee members were elected from amongst various stakeholder groups which include MoFA, Ghana Education Service (GES), Ghana Health Service (GHS), NGO's, Farmer Based Organizations, Magajiya, Chiefs, Tindanas (elders), Seed producers and market actors. Each stakeholder group elected one member to represent them on the District R4D platform committee. The District R4D committee was made up of 12 members. After election of the members of the R4D committee, the new committee members then went ahead to elect their executives. These executives were Chairperson, Vice-chairperson, Secretary, Organizer and Treasure.

**Table 1:** Tolon District R4D platform committee members and executives

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S/N** | **Name** | **Institution** | **Position** |
|  | Alhassan Adam | MoFA-Crop AEA | Chairperson |
|  | Amadu Adam | Chief | Vice-chairperson |
|  | Abu Karimu | Ghana Education Service | Secretary |
|  | Mariam Ibrahim | Ghana Health Service | Organizer |
|  | Issah Abukari | MoFA-Veterinary | Treasurer |
|  | Yahaya Damba | Assemblyman | Member |
|  | Abukari Abdul-Nasir | Farmer | Member |
|  | Baba Musah Abdul Nashiru | M and E officer | Member |
|  | Issah Fuseini | Tindana | Member |
|  | Alhassan Adam | MoFA-Crop AEA | Member |
|  | Amedatu Adam | MoFA-WIAD | Member |
|  | Alhassan Azara | Magajiya | Member |

The chairman of the occasion Mr. Abdulai Yussif (District Coordinating Director of Tolon) swore in the District R4D committee members into office.



Photo 1: Swearing in of Tolon R4D committee members by Mr. Abdulai Yussif (District Coordinating Director)

# Meeting with R4D platform committee members and executive

Mr Abdul Rahman Nurudeen, Africa RISING Research Associate, met with the elected R4D committee members and executives to brief them about the core mandate of the platform which was to identify a critical value chain research intervention that cuts-across all intervention communities by getting in touch with members at the community level. He also spelled out the roles of the R4D members and executives and tasked the committee members to have their first meeting within the next seven days to draw an activity plan for their quarterly meeting, opening of an account with a bank within the District for the project support in facilitating their meetings.

# Closing remarks

The chairperson for the program, Mr. Abdulai Yussif, thanked all participants for coming and tasked the District R4D committee members to work hard for the platform to achieve its targets and objectives for Africa RISING to be able to contribute its share of development in agricultural research.

# Annexes

**Annex 1:** Participants profile and their associated work during the R4D platform meeting

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Stakeholder | Function in the platform | Representation at meeting |
| Farmer Based Organizations (crop and livestock) | Users’ pf research products.  Generate research agenda.  Engage in R4D process. | 10 |
| Input dealers | First line of supply of inputs for out scaling | 2 |
| Market Actors | Access to markets.  First line of produce quality assurance. | 1 |
| Produce processors | Add value to products.  Create demand for produce. | 1 |
| Researchers | Generate new innovations to solve problems.  Support extension and adoption. | 6 |
| Media | Dissemination of innovation information. | 3 |
| Agriculture Extension Agents | Support adoption process.  Support participatory research. | 12 |
| District Director of Agriculture | Policy guidance for R4D work. | 1 |
| Local Government | Policy guidance for R4D work. | 7 |
| Development partners | Up and out scaling of innovation. | 2 |

Annex 2: List of participants at Tolon District R4D platform inauguration (20th January, 2015)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S/N** | **Participants** | **Title** | **Institution** |
| 1 | Alhassan Tia | Cheyohi No. 2 farmer | FBO |
| 2 | Harunu Hudu | Cheyohi No. 2 farmer | FBO |
| 3 | Shahadu Imoro | Cheyohi No. 2 Tendana | Tindana |
| 4 | Imoro Inusah | Cheyohi No. 2 Chief | Chief |
| 5 | Damba Awabu | Cheyohi No. 2 Magajiya | FBO |
| 6 | Damba Yahaya | Cheyohi No. 2 Assemblyman | Local Government |
| 7 | Fuseini Abdul Majeed | Tingoli farmer | FBO |
| 8 | Inusah Abdulai | Tingoli farmer | FBO |
| 9 | Alhassan Naporo | Tingoli Tendana | Tindana |
| 10 | Issah Fuseini | Tingoli Chief | Chief |
| 11 | Azaratu Seidu | Tingoli Magajiya | FBO |
| 12 | Sulemana Adam | Tingoli Assemblyman | Local Government |
| 13 | Abukari Abdul-Nasir | Bganjong farmer | FBO |
| 14 | Fuseini Bugli | Bganjong farmer | FBO |
| 15 | Issahaku Imoro | Bganjong Tendana | Tindana |
| 16 | Tia Dokurugu | Bganjong Chief | Chief |
| 17 | Biwuhitiyam Azara | Bganjong Magajiya | FBO |
| 18 | Abu Karim | Bganjong Assemblyman | Local Government |
| 19 | Abdulai Iddrisu | Tibogunayili farmer | FBO |
| 20 | Muniru Abukari | Tibogunayili farmer | FBO |
| 21 | Abdul Aziz Parinyan | Tibogunayili Tendana | Tindana |
| 22 | Alhassan Sulemana | Tibogunayili Chief | Chief |
| 23 | Azaratu Alhassan | Tibogunayili Magajiya | FBO |
| 24 | Adam Mahama | Tibogunayili Assemblyman | Local Government |
| 25 | Alhassan Soule | Kprim farmer | FBO |
| 26 | Yakubu Sumani | Kprim farmer | FBO |
| 27 | Fuseina Abukari | Kprim Tendana | Tindana |
| 28 | Ibrahim Umaar | Kprim Chief | Chief |
| 29 | Abiba Mohammed | Kprim Magajiya | FBO |
| 30 | Shaibu Fuseini | Kprim Assemblyman | Local Government |
| 31 | Hon. Abukari Seidu | District Chief Executive (DCE) Tolon | Local Government |
| 32 | Abdulai Yussif | Dist. Co-ord. Director Tolon | Local Government |
| 33 | Saaka Musah | Dep. Dist. Co-ord. Director Tolon | Local Government |
| 34 | Hajia Hawa Musah | Dist. Director of Agric. Tolon | MoFA |
| 35 | Musah Iddrisu | Dist. Director of Agric. Kumbungu | MoFA |
| 36 | Hajia Sophia Mahama | District Health Director | GHS |
| 37 | Amoli Abako | District Education Director | GES |
| 38 | Mohammed Rasheda | District Planning Officer Tolon | Local Government |
| 39 | Fauzia Munkaila | District Planning Officer Kumbungu | Local Government |
| 40 | Ibrahim Mohammed | District Agric Officers (DAO’s) | MoFA |
| 41 | Baba Abduul Nashiru Musah | MIS Officer Tolon | MoFA |
| 42 | Abdulai Bawa Ishaq | MIS Officer Kumbungu | MoFA |
| 43 | Cosmos Nyar | District Extension Officer | MoFA |
| 44 | Atchulo Abukari | District Crops Officer | MoFA |
| 45 | Idris Zanabongo | District Livestock Officer | MoFA |
| 46 | Aimatu Issaka | District Veterinary Officer (DVO) | MoFA |
| 47 | Alhassan Shaibu | Department of Cooperative | Local government |
| 48 | Karim Amadu | AEA - Crop - Cheyohi No. 2 | MoFA |
| 49 | Sylvalin Ogeche Mbah | AEA - Crop - Tingoli | MoFA |
| 50 | Karim Musah | AEA - Crop - Gbanjon | MoFA |
| 51 | Iddrisu Abdul Rahaman | AEA - Crop - Tibogunayili | MoFA |
| 52 | Adam Alhassan | AEA - Crop - Kprim | MoFA |
| 53 | Alhassan Salifu Tee | AEA - Veterinary - Cheyohi No. 2 | MoFA |
| 54 | Sule Yahaya | AEA - Veterinary - Tingoli | MoFA |
| 55 | Sesbestina Adareba | AEA - Veterinary - Gbanjong | MoFA |
| 56 | Issah Abukari | AEA - Veterinary - Tibogunayili | MoFA |
| 57 | Alhassan Zakaria Adam | AEA - Veterinary - Kprim | MoFA |
| 58 | Amedatu Adam | WIAD Officer Tolon | MoFA |
| 59 | Cynthia Nagali | WIAD Officer Kumbungu | MoFA |
| 60 | Zakaria karim | Service Provider | NGO (Durga Agric. Ltd.) |
| 61 | Naresh Shukla | Manager | NGO (CARD Financail Inst.) |
| 62 | Patrick A. Apula | Seed Producers | SEEDPAG |
| 63 | Alhassan Abdulai | Livestock Dealer | Private Sector |
| 64 | Yazibu Barikisu | Processor | Private Sector |
| 65 | Dugje Ibrahim | System Agronomist | IITA-Africa RISING |
| 66 | Abdul Rahman Nurudeen | Research Associate | IITA-Africa RISING |
| 67 | Shaibu Mellon-Bedi | Research Supervisor | IITA-Africa RISING |
| 68 | Comfort Yelipoie | Research Supervisor | IITA-Africa RISING |
| 69 | Dokrugu Fuseni | Research technician | IITA-Africa RISING |
| 70 | Sulemana Alhassan | Research technician | IITA-Africa RISING |
| 71 | Ebenerzer Nartey | Research technician | IITA-Africa RISING |